

Message Text

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15
ACTION EA-10

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P R 180952Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9532
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 2689

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CH, KN, KS
SUBJECT: ROK REACTION TO KIM IL-SUNG PEKING VISIT

REF: PEKING 716

1. ROK IS FOLLOWING VISIT BY KIM IL-SUNG TO PEKING
WITH INTEREST AND APPREHENSION. ALTHOUGH THERE IS MUCH
DISCUSSION AS TO VISIT'S MEANING, SOUTH KOREANS REMAIN
UNCERTAIN AS TO ITS PURPOSE AND ITS PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES
FOR ROK.

2. PRESS IS PRINTING WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS OF
KIM'S TRIP. EDITORIAL REACTION THUS FAR HAS GENERALLY
FOLLOWED LEAD OF PRESIDENT PARK, WHO COMMENTED ON LEARNING
OF TRIP THAT "NO ONE CAN TELL WHAT THE NORTH KOREAN
COMMUNIST HEAD WILL DO IN PEKING. BUT WE SHOULD
REMEMBER THAT KIM VISITED STALIN AND PURCHASED
WAR WEAPONS FROM THE USSR SHORTLY BEFORE THE KOREAN
WAR."
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3. GOVERNMENT SEOUL SHINMUN SPECULATED THAT KIM WILL
ASK PRC TO STEP UP ITS DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO GET
US TROOPS OUT OF ROK. PAPER ALSO SAID IT MUST BE
ASSUMED KIM'S BUSINESS IN PEKING IS IMPORTANT, SINCE

HE WOULD HAVE KNOWN EFFECT HIS TRIP WILL HAVE ON USSR.
GOVERNMENT KOREA HERALD AND SEMI-OFFICIAL KYONGHYANG
SHINMUN WARN THAT POSSIBILITY OF PYONGYANG MISCALCULATION
HAS GROWN SINCE INDOCHINA DEBACLE AND VIEW KIM'S TRIP
IN THIS LIGHT. THEY ALSO LINK VISIT TO REITERATION
AT APRIL 17 MEETING OF ROK ARMY COMMANDERS OF ROKG
STATEMENT THAT KOREA IS IN STATE OF WAR. TONGA ILBO
VIEWS VISIT WITH LESS ALARM, EXPRESSING BELIEF THAT
PRC WILL STEER KIM AWAY FROM MILITARY ADVENTURE WITH
RISK IT ENTAILS OF PRC CONFRONTATION WITH US.

4. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBASSY, ROKG OFFICIALS HAVE
AGREED ONLY ON LACK OF INDICATIONS AS TO MEANING OF
VISIT. RED CROSS VICE PRESIDENT YI POM-SOK TOLD POL
COUNS THAT UNSPECIFIED GROUP OF OFFICIALS HAD
DISCUSSED VISIT INCONCLUSIVELY FOR FOUR HOURS
APRIL 17. YI SPECULATES KIM INITIATED THE TRIP TO
PEKING IN ORDER TO FORESTALL ANY MOVES DETRIMENTAL
TO PYONGYANG RESULTING FROM SCHEDULED VISIT BY
PRESIDENT FORD TO PEKING. ON OTHER HAND, DR. YI YONG-HO
OF NATIONAL UNIFICATION BOARD FEELS IT MAY HAVE BEEN
PRC WHICH REQUESTED SUDDEN MEETING, EITHER TO PRE-EMPT
USSR OR TO CAUTION KIM AGAINST AGGRAVATING SITUATION IN
KOREA. MOFA IS ALSO UNSURE OF TRIP'S IMPLICATIONS
BUT SEES IT IN LIGHT OF POST-INDOCHINA SINO-SOVIET RELATION-
SHIP.

5. COMMENT: WHATEVER VISIT IMPLIES FOR PRC-DPRK
POSITION, ROKG WILL CERTAINLY USE IT AS FURTHER
JUSTIFICATION FOR TIGHTENED SECURITY AT HOME.
THIS IS ALREADY EVIDENT IN REMARKS AT COMMANDERS
CONFERENCE AND FURTHER CALLS IN PRESS FOR NATIONAL
UNITY.
SNEIDER

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